

February 16, 2007

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WASHINGTON, DC—Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) made a five-minute speech last night about the House resolution opposing the president's proposal for a troop surge in Iraq, H. Con. Res. 63. Included is an excerpt from his speech.

"I rise in support of today's resolution. The Bush administration has saddled our troops with a failed strategy in Iraq, and now proposes to escalate that strategy. Despite outrageous allegations from some on the Republican side, it is that failed strategy that hurts our troops, not the words of those of us who have pointed out the obvious.

"In response to the resolution, Republicans have trotted out the tired and thoroughly discredited catchphrase that if we don't fight them there, we will have to fight them here, invoking the specter of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. However, U.S. intelligence agencies have refuted the claim that the conflict in Iraq is driven by al-Qaeda. The violence is driven by a 1,400-year-old conflict, primarily between Iraqi Sunnis and Shias, and our troops are caught in the middle. The Iraqi Sunnis and Shias have no interest in or capability to attack the United States.

"The Republicans don't want to have a debate over the strategy and are trying to conflate support for the troops with support for the president's failed strategy dressed up with a little dose of escalation. Supporting the troops does not require supporting the failed policies of the president.

"A better strategy is to announce a timeline negotiated with the Iraqi government to bring our troops home over the next six months to a year. Doing so would boost the Iraqi government's legitimacy and claim to self-rule, and force the Iraqi government to take responsibility for itself and its citizens. The U.S. must also engage in robust diplomacy with all factions in Iraq, except the foreign terrorists and domestic al-Qaeda elements, and work with Iraq's neighbors in an effort to bring about political reconciliation among Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds.

“Our troops have done all that has been asked of them in Iraq. Saddam Hussein is dead. His allies are on the run or in prison. The threat from WMDs in Iraq is nonexistent. The war that Congress authorized has been won. Our troops should come home. Congress did not authorize U.S. troops to referee a civil war in Iraq.”

Click [here](#) to read the full text of the speech.

Click [here](#) to view a video of Rep. DeFazio's floor statement.